

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 513

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Dennis S. Freeman.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Dennis S. Freeman; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Freeman was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, working as a psychologist and leader for almost half a century, Dr. Freeman began his tenure as chief executive officer of Cherokee Health Systems in 1978, dedicating his whole self to the improvement of countless Tennesseans' lives by increasing their access to medical care; and

WHEREAS, he, along with his fervent advocates and supporters, helped to transform Cherokee Health Systems from a struggling community mental health center with three offices to the largest community mental health center in Tennessee, serving over 70,000 patients annually with over 650 staff members at twenty-two brick-and-mortar locations, one mobile clinic, and twenty-three school-based telemedicine clinics; and

WHEREAS, passionate about providing care to the less fortunate, Dr. Freeman worked with neglected communities in rural Appalachia and urban Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Memphis to establish accessible mental health care, and he inspired the growth of such care from coast-to-coast with his motto, "go where the grass is browner"; and

WHEREAS, he was a strong advocate for community-based education and training to develop a healthcare workforce capable of serving communities in need, and he impacted State

and federal policy by meeting with countless Tennessee legislators and testifying numerous times before the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Freeman was a visionary pioneer in the integration of behavioral and primary medical services, treating the whole person rather than discrete parts, and his work has come to be known as the "Cherokee Model" nationally, along with Dr. Freeman's own given moniker as the "Grandfather of Integrated Care"; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to recognition, Dr. Freeman received the inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Tennessee Department of Psychology and the Outstanding Contribution to Psychology Award from the Tennessee Psychological Association; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Freeman was also deeply devoted to his family and his wife, Rhonda, and the couple cheered the Vols basketball and football teams at every game they could attend; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Freeman is survived by his wife; his children, Erik Freeman, Lindsey Freeman (Jessi Jackson), and Tara (Chris) Donahue; his brother, Douglas (Cathie) Joseph; and his cousins David (Theresa) Nadgwick, Donna (Darwin) Smith, and Bill Walton; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Stanley and Margaret Freeman, and a cousin, Deanna Walton; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dennis Freeman leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF

REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. Dennis S. Freeman, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Freeman.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.